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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000389

SIPDIS

FOR DS/IP/NEA AND DS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2014

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: ISLAMIC YOUTHS CONDUCT FIERY RAMPAGE AT A MANAMA RESTAURANT

Classified By: CHARGE ROBERT FORD FOR REASONS 1.4 (c)

11. (C) Bahrain Police sources advised RSO that an enraged crowd of 50 or more Islamist teenagers ransacked La Terrasse restaurant for serving alcohol and burned the cars of seven customers in Manama on Wednesday March 17. Conservative Muslim youths assembled from five villages (Adari, Jid Hafs, Sanabis, Chamis and Tashan) in the surrounding area once the mayhem began, swelling their number beyond 200.

12. (C) The juvenile offenders came prepared with knives, rocks and molotov cocktails. The largest vehicle damaged, a Cadillac SUV with Saudi plates, was rolled on its side and torched. RSO observed five vehicles burned and two damaged in the restaurant parking lot on Thursday morning. Most of the vehicles had Saudi license plates. The La Terrasse is a nice restaurant surrounded by predominantly Shia neighborhoods. It is common knowledge that alcohol is served at this expensive eatery, but it does not have the unsavory reputation of the establishments attacked last week.

13. (C) The police arrested 12 of the teenagers Wednesday evening and detained 4 more for questioning on March 19 according to the Officer in Charge of the Sanabis Police Station. The officer further commented that the Undersecretary, Ministry of Interior, Shaikh Daij ordered police to identify the principals and make arrests. The police responded to the restaurant in adequate numbers but did not disperse the crowd quickly.

14. (C) COMMENT: This is the second violent anti-alcohol and prostitution confrontation with businessmen in as many weeks. Manama has been calm since the March 17 incident. The GOB has put on a heavy media campaign to denounce this kind of street action against perceived dens of inequity.

FORD